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day and of the late eighteenth century, the ornament is carved from the solid wood; the plain surfaces being set back to obtain the necessary relief. The skill and labor that this implies is enormous, especially in view of the extreme refinement and precision of the execution. In this connection, the superb handling of the various planes in the door panels should be noted, and particularly the convex surface of the monogram field, where the slightest technical slip would have spelt disaster. This particular detail exemplifies the increasing freedom with which earlier motives were being treated in connection with such Regency motives as the banded reed molding. But this freedom is kept in perfect control by sufficient emphasis on the simple framework of the design. It is the omission of this necessary emphasis which led to the excesses of the mid-eighteenth-century design.

The old steel lock and hinges are still in place and in perfect working order, which gives additional evidence of the care and esteem with which the piece has been treated since its completion. According to the customary arrangement, the armoire is assembled in eight main parts, consisting of the two wings of the door, the two sides with the corner pilasters, the hood, including its elaborate front, the bottom, and two sections of paneling forming the back. These parts are connected by steel pins, and are easily separable, enabling the piece to be moved through narrow doorways and packed for transportation.

To realize the superb qualities of design and craftsmanship that give such express

value to the piece, a first-hand examination is necessary, and it is hoped that every student and lover of such work will avail himself of the opportunity afforded by this recent acquisition, which is now on exhibition in Gallery J 11. M. R. R.

A CRUCIFIXION BY PESELLINO

THE remarkable thing about the small Crucifixion attributed to Pesellino¹ which the Museum has bought lately is the landscape background. The figures, though dignified and impressive, can not compare with the figures in the tiny picture of the same subject by this artist which the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin bought out of an English collection several years ago. The Christ in that panel is a masterly creation and the holy people have a solidity of form and an intensity of expression that the figures in ours can not approach. Our version is more youthful in workmanship and its only advantage over the other, which has a gold background, lies in the in-



DETAIL OF ARMOIRE

terest of the landscape.

Our panel shows its author's reliance on Fra Angelico, whose work it recalls in spirit, in color, and above all in the landscape. The attribution to Pesellino is vouched for by several authorities, chief among whom is Langton Douglas, the editor of the most recent edition of Crowe and Cavalcaselle's *History of Italian Painting*. Pesellino according to Wiesbach² came in direct contact with Fra Angelico,

¹Tempera on wood: H. 16½ in.; W. 11¼ in. Purchase, Marquand Fund, 1919.

²Francesco Pesellino, p. 37.

working as an assistant on the predelle of the San Marco and the Perugia altarpieces about the year 1440. The fact is not established, however, nor is it necessary in the explanation of the traits of the young painter that are due to Angelico's influence.

The most impressionable period of Pesellino's life fell at the time when the old mediaeval concepts were giving place to the naturalism of the fifteenth century and all the greater Florentine artists were then innovators. Fra Angelico himself, contrary to the old idea, is now recognized as one of the innovators. The innovation of his that was most prominent at the time of Pesellino's youth was in landscape. Berenson says that Fra Angelico is the first Italian to paint a landscape that can be identified; and more than that he appears to have been the first who remarked the part played by the atmosphere in the modification of the color of objects, the most important fact in the history of European landscape painting. The panels which Fra Angelico painted for the Annunciata in Florence (now in the Accademia) are examples of this effort after atmospheric effect, and these were the starting point for our picture.

The mediaeval conception of landscape still persists in our panel; it is not all founded on observation. The foreground is the gray, rocky ledge with crisp edges like split jelly that was inherited from Byzantine art.

But back of the formal foreground is real country with air between the beholder and it, such as one sees at twilight in Tuscany. There is a hill with pines and cypresses showing dark against farther shadowy hills and distant green-blue mountains lit up with the level evening light. The sky is luminous and opalescent at the horizon but higher up, back of the figure of Christ, are rain clouds of heavy blue. All except the foreground has been seen and set down much in the modern way, and this gives its peculiar interest to our little picture. Students of Italian painting will find an attraction also in that it shows one of the earliest glimpses into that mysterious, blue-peaked land that succeeding artists explored more deeply,

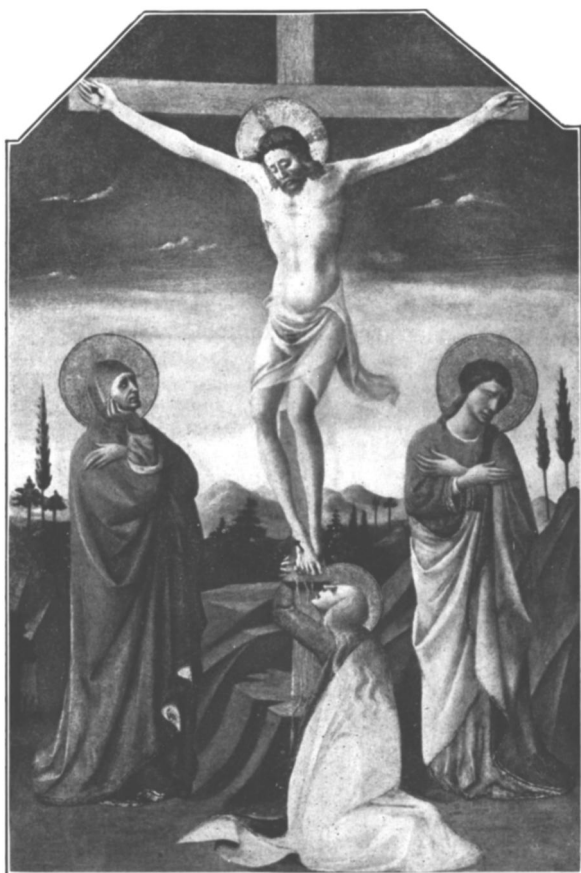
the consummate aspect of which is seen back of the Virgin of the Rocks and of Mona Lisa. B. B.

TAPESTRIES IN THE SUMMER LOAN EXHIBITION

TWO important tapestries were added to the loan exhibition of laces and tapestries—which opened on June 16 and will continue until October 31—too late to be mentioned in the notice of the exhibition in the June number of the BULLETIN. We take this occasion, therefore, to call attention to these tapestries, lent by Lewis L. Clarke, and to offer some additional notes on the other tapestries in the exhibition.

Mr. Clarke's tapestries were woven at the famous French manufactory of Beauvais, under the direction of Philippe Behagle, who conducted the works between 1684 and 1705. They form part of a set of The Metamorphoses and illustrate the fables of Vertumnus and Pomona, and Pan and Syrinx. The name of Behagle appears on the selva of the latter tapestry. The designer is thought to have been René Antoine Houasse (1645-1710), a French painter of repute, whose style shows the influence of Poussin and Le Brun. The splendid, rich colors of these tapestries remind one of the earlier weaves of the Gothic period, although in their drawing and composition, which reveal the classical taste of the time, nothing of the mediaeval tradition remains. Comparison with the Boucher tapestries in the exhibition will show the change which came in the eighteenth century, when more delicate color harmonies were preferred.

To the same period of the late seventeenth century belong three tapestries from a set of five owned by Mortimer L. Schiff. This set, known as the *Grotesques Chinois*, was one of the most successful woven at Beauvais, and certainly one of the most beautiful. The cartoons were furnished by the painter-decorator, Jean Berain, whose favorite arabesque designs, with their amusing combinations of fantastic architecture and human and animal forms, are notable in the history of orna-



CRUCIFIXION BY PESELLINO